

George Danforth House
200 West Avenue
Rochester
Monroe County
New York

HABS No. NY-5642

HABS
NY,
22 - ROOM,
16

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5642

GEORGE DANFORTH HOUSE

NY,
28 - ROCH, 16 -

Location: 200 West Avenue, Rochester, Monroe County, New York
Present Owner: City of Rochester
Present Occupant: Center for the Elderly
Present Use: Recreation center
Statement of Built in 1848, this is one of the few remaining
Significance: local examples of the American Gothic Revival
style as popularized by A. J. Downing.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1848.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
1848-1899 George F. Danforth
1899 Deed by will, May 16, 1899, Book 616, p. 382.
From: George F. Danforth.
To: Jessie Appleton Miller, daughter.
1937 Deed by will, February 2, 1937, Book 2217, p. 359.
From: Jesse Appleton Miller.
To: Charles E. Miller and Danforth Miller, sons.
1945 Deed, November 21, 1945, Book 2298, p. 382.
From: Charles E. Miller and Danforth Miller.
To: City of Rochester.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans: Unknown.
6. Alterations and additions: The octagonal tower roof, eave decorations and the front porch have been removed since 1945. A contemporary enclosed entrance porch has been added to the south facade.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

George F. Danforth (1819-1899) practised law in Rochester, beginning in 1843. He was an Associate Judge, Court of Appeals, State of New York, 1879-1889.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Barton, Obituaries. Vol. I. Rochester Public Library, History Division.

Deeds, Office of Monroe County Clerk.

Maps: Plat Book of Rochester, 1900, Plate 23, Office of Monroe County Clerk. Book of Maps, 6, 1884, p. 50, Office of Monroe County Clerk.

Tengwall Scrapbook. Vol. I. Rochester Public Library, History Division.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Devoy, John. History of the City of Rochester. 1895.

Historic Houses in Rochester, New York. Vol. I. Rochester, n. d.

Rochester Historical Society Publications. Vols. II, IV, XI, XX, 1922-1942.

2. Likely sources not yet investigated: Family diaries (Mrs. Donald McNab, Rochester); other sources in Rochester Public Library.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This "cottage" in the popular American Gothic Revival style was at one time fitted with pierced balustrades, cusped pinnacles and castellated porch roofing. Although these details have been removed, the structure stands as one of Rochester's few examples in this nineteenth century style.

2. Condition of fabric: The building has been municipally maintained, with little attention to the historical fabric of the structure. The building is in fair condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately seventy-six feet by fifty feet; seven bay, three-sectioned facade; two story; rectangular with projections.
2. Foundations: The cut stone foundations elevated nine inches above ground are pierced with windows.
3. Wall construction: The white vertical board and batten walls are finished with a drip molding at the foundation level.
4. Structural system: There is a wood frame system.
5. Chimneys: One modern capped brick chimney is located in the central section.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance, located in the east section of the south facade, has been enclosed by a contemporary porch. The original label molding with drops and sidelights frame the six panel entrance door. The recessed, two bay entrance located in the west section of the south facade is framed by a label molding. A single window and a six panel door with toplight panel are finished with label moldings.
 - b. Windows: All rectangular windows are double hung. All windows have label moldings. Paired lancet windows with arched label molding are set in the second floor of the center and east sections of the south facade. Paired, pointed windows set in a three-part frame with pointed label molding are set above the recessed entrance of the west section of the south facade.
7. Roof: The gabled roofs are covered with asbestos shingles. Open gabled dormers frame the decorative second story windows of the south facade. The overhanging eaves were fitted originally with decorative bargeboards. The pointed roof of the east tower has

been removed.

8. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: The contemporary hipped roof porch of the east section of the south facade is fitted with large windows to the east and west. The simple framed doorway has no door. The porch encloses the five step entrance stair. A projecting entrance stair provides access to the recessed entrance of the south facade.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The east entrance of the south facade provides access to a north-south hallway with a rear entrance at the north. The double parlors are to the east. The other principal first floor rooms are to the west. Other first floor rooms are distributed around an east-west hall which intersects the main hallway opposite the main staircase. The plan of the second floor is similar, although the large spaces of the first floor have been subdivided. From the plan and exterior detailing, it is probable that the west section is a later addition.
2. Stairways: The main staircase, located at the east side of the north-south hall, rises in a single run with two turned balusters per step and large newel post. There is a narrow enclosed stairway in the west section.
3. Flooring: Most oak hardwood floors are covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The plaster walls and ceilings are painted. The east double room is fitted with partitions paneled with a design of ogee arches.
5. Doorways and doors: The four panel double entrance doors have center etched glass panels with ogee arch frame. The lower wood panels are similarly treated. Other single doors, ten feet high, have six panels divided into two tiers. Doors and windows are capped with a decorative cornice molding. Some windows have paneled shutters.
6. Special decorative features, trim, cabinet work: The library has closed bookcases fitted with glass panels containing a design of ogee arches. The dining

room has built-in cabinets fitted with paneled doors. Original black, white and grey marble fireplaces remain. The round arched surrounds are framed with paneled spandrels and a center cartouche.

7. Hardware: Some original butt hinges remain.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south. A front contemporary parking lot is located between entrances and the major thoroughfare, West Street. A residential area is located to the south. Small industries are to the north and west. Two high-rise apartment buildings have been built to the east.

Prepared by Amy Hecker
Society for the Pre-
servation of Land-
marks in Western New
York
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project of twenty-six selections of historical and architecturally significant Rochester structures was undertaken in 1966, by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc., Mrs. Patrick Harrington, Executive Director, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, James C. Massey, Chief. The project was under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Senior Historian. Architectural and historical descriptions were contributed by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc. General photographic documentation was undertaken by Hans Padelt, Senior Engineer, Graflex, on a contractual basis with the Historic American Buildings Survey. The final documentation and editing was done by Susan R. Slade in 1978, for transmittal to the Library of Congress and the impending publication of the Historic American Buildings Survey New York State catalogue.